Longsight News.

SPRING 1979. No.19.

a community newspaper for Longsight.

8p.

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EDITORIAL

This is the first LONGSIGHT NEWS for nearly a year. The paper stopped coming out because there were not enough people to work on it. The people who have produced this issue have not been involved in producing the paper before. If you would like to join us, please contact us at the Slade Lane Neighbourhood Centre. You can do as much or as little as you want, so don't be afraid that it will be too much for you.

OUR AIMS

We intend to publish the truth as we see it about issues which we believe to be of concern to the people of this area. We do not believe there is such a thing as unbiased truth. A quick comparison of the reporting of a controversial topical subject in say the Daily Mail and the Daily Mirror will illustrate this. We are biased in favour of people in our area if we believe they are being badly treated by anyone, whether they are a private individual or an employee of a powerful organisation such as the Town Hall or the police force.

This is not the type of paper read by the rich and powerful, except those who wish to use the law of libel to prevent their deeds coming to public attention.

We believe the paper has always acted responsibly and intend to continue that way. We hope to counteract the steady drip drip drip of anti-people propaganda of the papers who print for profit and influence. We will not print people's names for the sake of sensationalism as the big papers do. If ordinary people in the area have been victimised we will not print their names unless they agree, but we will name the names of people who we believe are misusing their power over us. Anyone mentioned in the paper will be given the chance to reply through the letters column.

We think this gives sufficient protection to people such as P.C. Kelly (who sued one of our writers for libel). The libel laws are an oppressive restriction on the freedom of speech, which often prevents the truth being brought to light. Libel protects only the rich. You cannot get Legal Aid either to defend or to initiate a libel action. We will take steps to protect our contributors when they wish to write about the misdeeds of the rich and powerful.

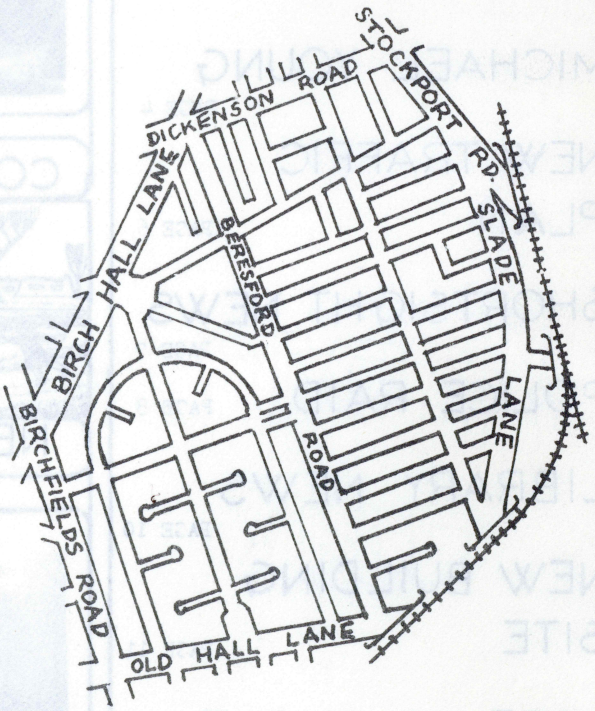
THE AREA

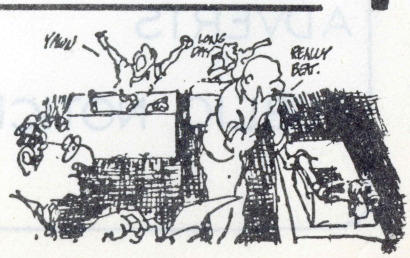
We will be covering the area between Slade Lane and Beresford Road mainly. This issue will be sold on the Anson Estate, as we think that many people there will be interested in the Libel Case Report. If anyone on the Anson Estate would like to see that area covered in future issues of the paper, and they are prepared to take on the work involved in getting stories from that area, then we will carry on covering the Anson as well.

COURT REPORT LIBEL

As promised in our Free Libel Case Special issue, we are including a report of the 3-day Longsight News libel case trial.

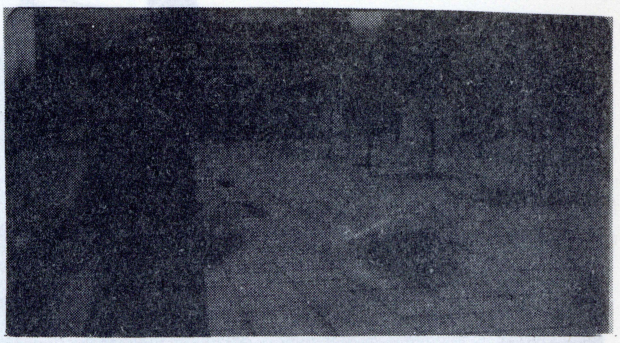
We apologise for the length of the report, but we think many of our readers who could not get to court would like to read the main points of the case. We think this is the first libel action involving a community paper which has gone to court.





LONGSIGHT NEWS

CASE



P.C. Kelly leaving Court

GENTLE GIANT

P.C. Kelly, dubbed the "Gentle Giant" by no less than three of his prosecution witnesses, has won £300 damages in his libel action over an article published by Longsight News. Court costs which if claimed would run into thousands of pounds, were also awarded against the writer of the article, Alix Otten, a single mother of Slade Grove, Longsight. Ms Otten conducted her own defence as legal aid is not available for libel cases and she could not afford the high costs of baristers and solicitors. Mr Kelly's costs were paid by the Police Federation.

MINORS QUESTIONED

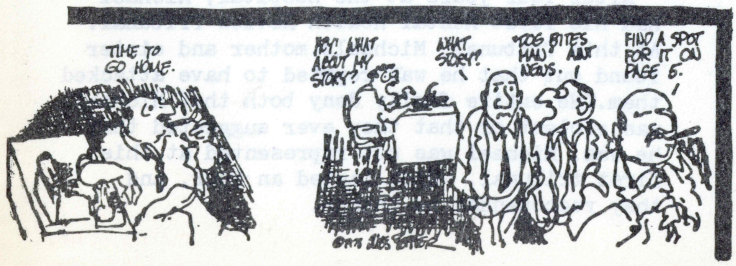
The offending words stating that Mr. Kelly had "beaten about" a lad during questioning were part of an article published by Longsight News in June 1975. The article about irregularities in Police questioning of minors in the Longsight area only referred to the beating incident in passing.

AFRAID

When asked for his address, Mr Kelly who lives in Alkrington said he was afraid of repercussions if his home address was read out in court. He was allowed to write it down instead.

AREA CONSTABLE

At the time of the article Mr. Kelly had been operating as an area constable for three years. He was the only constable assigned to the area, which is a similar area to that covered by Longsight News. In evidence Mr. Kelly said he tried to create goodwill in Longsight. He sought especially to establish a good relationship with children in the area and mentioned St. Roberts Youth Club in particular. He said he had a very good relation with the public.



Later in the trial Mr. Kelly's one-time superior officer, who lives in Wilmslow, added that his job was to get people's trust so they would give him information. People should be able to identify him so that if they saw him on the street they could speak to him. His duties also included a "crime patrol" in plain clothes and involved the use of an unmarked police car.

BROKEN WINDOWS

In January 1974, there had been a series of broken windows in part of P.C. Kelly's area (Duncan Road and Clitheroe Road) and he suspected a lad who lived in Duncan Road. One night after midnight Mr. Kelly heard over his car radio that there had been another window smashing and that people from Duncan Road had been taken in. When he arrived back at Longsight Police Station three lads were already there.

RECORDS BURNT

Mr. Kelly interviewed the lads about the previous smashed windows in the area. When asked about the age of the lad mentioned in the newspaper article he said that the original copy of the charge sheet in which the lads age had been altered, was destroyed in a fire about a year ago. Later, in her summing up Ms Otten said she had not been told what records had been destroyed and what wasn't. Also the officer now in charge of these records said he knew nothing about this fire.

T.I.C.

According to P.C. Kelly, one of the lads admitted to two other window smashing incidents after being questioned. No notes were taken of this questioning as any confessions would be offences "taken into consideration" (T.I.C.) and no evidence would be required in court, since a signed confession would be obtained.

When asked if a sudden admission of other offences was a result of intimidation, P.C. Kelly said offences are only taken into consideration if they are volunteered. He denied that any method would be used to clear the books of unsolved crimes. He also stated that he never used force except to protect himself.

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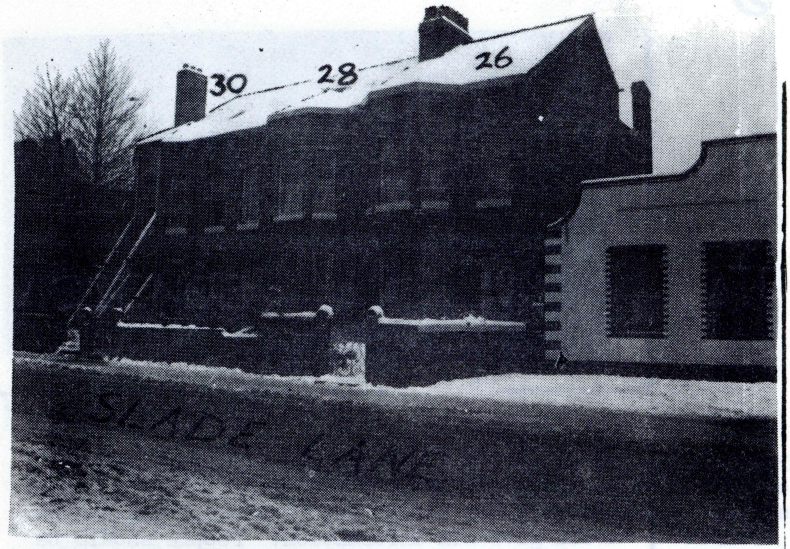
HOUSING ACTION AREA



30 SLADE LANE

Since they declared a Housing Action Area (HAA) in July 1975 which includes the old Clearance Area, the Town Hall have been buying up houses in the area. Having bought up number 30 Slade Lane on the end of a block of three (see photo), they have let it become a ruin. Now they may decide to pull it down. According to Mr Ratcliffe at the Town Hall's Hector Road Improvement Office no decision has yet been made on what to do with number 30. The decision has to go to the Environmental Housing Sub-Committee, and the Housing Committee itself.

CONVENIENT BLOCK

They may also want to get hold of number 26 and 28 to make a nice convenient block for demolition. But the Jacksons in the middle house at number 28 don't want to move. They have spent a lot of their own money on their house after the Town Hall served a dangerous building notice on them. But according to Mr Ratcliffe they have not brought the house up to their required standard for the HAA.

SURROUNDED

The other house in the block, number 26 has been standing empty for some time and would cost a lot of money to do up. The council has been trying to buy it but the owner turned down their offer. If the Town Hall did manage

Six years ago local people in the area bounded by Slade Lane, Slade Grove, Hamilton Road and Palm Street got together and fought a long hard battle against the Town Hall who wanted to bulldoze all the houses in the area.

DEMOLITION FEARS

As a result the residents won more or less everything they wanted. This included demolition of some of the worst houses and saving the best houses. Those to be demolished have been gone some time now (work has now started on the main site cleared, see article on page 11), but now there are fears that the council may want to get the bulldozers in again - as a result of their own neglect.

The strange case of Michael Young

SPECIAL HOSPITAL

Michael Young is 26, and comes from Manchester For 6 years he has been a patient in Moss Side hospital, a maximum security psychiatric 'special hospital' near Liverpool.

This hospital is run by the Home Office, not the N.H.S. He is detained under a "Restriction Order" which lasts for an 'indefinate period', under section 65 of the Mental Health Act.

VIOLENCE

Michael was sent to Moss Side after interviews with 3 psychiatrists while waiting to be sentanced on a charge of theft of goods worth £315. He had a long record of petty thefts and convictions, but had never been charged with violence of any sort.But the psychiatrists classified him as a subnormal and psychopathic,reccomending detention in Moss Side hospital.

KILLED PETS

Their reports said that Michael had killed pets in his home, attacked his sister and mother with a knife, molesting his young sister, and had a history of drugtaking.

TRIBUNAL

After four years at the hospital, Michael had his first Mental Health Review Tribunal. At this Tribunal, Michaels mother and sister found out that he was reported to have attacked them.THe entire family deny both that Michael was violent or that they ever suggested that he was. Michael was not represented at this first tribunal, which lasted an hour, and they reccomended no change.

COUNCIL NEGLECT?

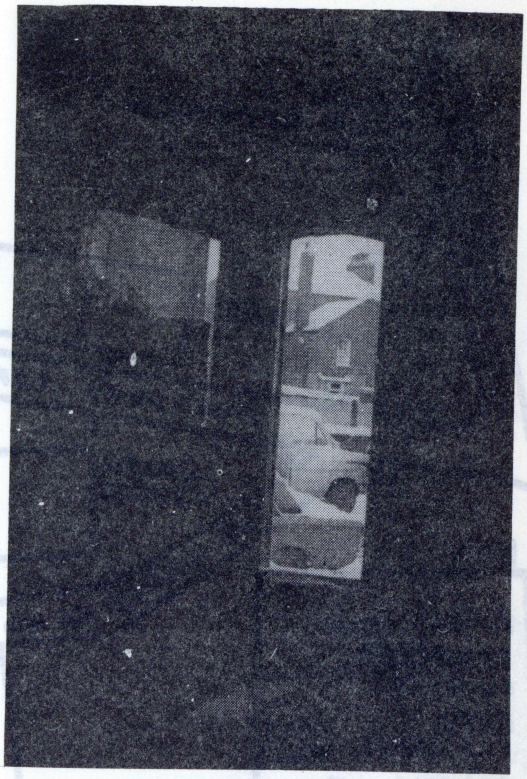
to buy up number 26, the Jacksons would be surrounded. Even so they believe there is nothing the council can do to get them out, since the house was saved from the previous demolition threat.

COMPULSORY POWERS

According to the Act of Parliament which governs HAA's, the Town Hall can make Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO's) on any houses in the area for various reasons, including "for the purpose of the improvement of the housing accomodation in the area as a whole". The procedure would be similar to that for a Clearance Area and would include a Public Inquiry as before. As far as we know this power has not yet been used in Manchester.

FIVE YEARS UP

But when the five years allowed for the HAA are up in July next year, the council must review the situation in the area. Although they can decide to apply to the Government for an extension of 2 years (this is the maximum time allowed for HAA's), as the end of the HAA gets nearer the Town Hall are bound to consider much more seriously the possibility of using their compulsory powers.



Inside 30 Slade Lane, a Town Hall house

We intend to print more stories about the HAA, so please contact us about how the HAA is affecting you. Possible subjects are problems in getting grants approved, high costs of improvement (are the Town Hall's standards too high?), empty houses, are council tenants able to return to their houses after improvement? How does improvement affect rents? What is happening to the trees and other environmental things?

NOT SUBNORMAL

At his second tribunal Michael was represented by the Manchester Law Centre. An independant psychiatrist who had interviewed Michael, said that he was neither psychopathic nor subnormal and never should have been sent to Moss Side hospital at all. His family denied all the allegations of violence against them.

AVERAGE I.Q.

A clinical psychologist who tested Michael, said he was of average I.Q. The story about killing pets turned out to be a rumour.

PSYCHOPATHIC

At the tribunal his current psychiatrist stated that Michael was psychopathic because he had said "it was all right for the poor to steal from the rich because the rich steal from the poor."

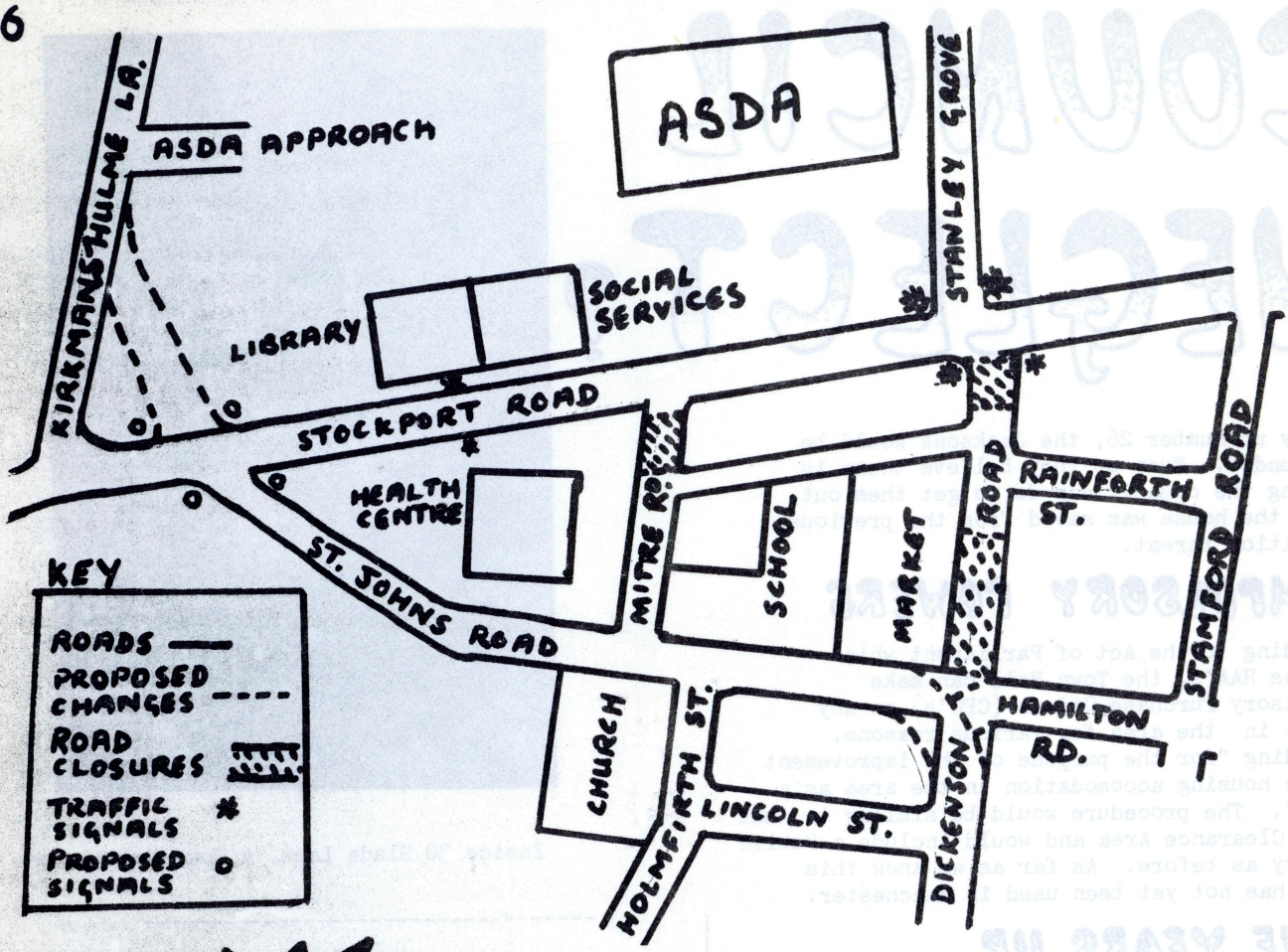
FARCE

The Mental Health Review Tribunal is a complete farce for under Section 65 it has no power to release the patient. All authority rests with the Home Secretary. The Home Sec. takes advice from a commitee, the Aarvold board, which meets inthe absence of the patient or representatives.

DEFENCE COMMITEE

As part of the campaign which will be needed to free Michael, the Manchester Law Centre plans to initiate legal proceedings against the Home Secretary. The defence commitee plans to organize a public meeting in Manchester, and if supported, to demonstrate against Section 65 and for Michaels release.

Anyone interested in the campaign should contact: Defend Michael Young, c/o Grass Roots Books, 109, Oxford Road, Manchester.



NEW TRAFFIC PLAN

Remember the grandiose schemes by the Council in the early 1970's to turn Longsight into a motorway racetrack? They were shelved when it was found that they were too expensive. It seems, though, that these plans havn't been forgotten. The powers-that-be intend to carry on with their plan bit by bit, starting with some of the 'cheaper' parts.

One of the parts which has resurfaced is now known as the St. John's Road 'improvement', which is to be brought before the Highways Committee at the Town Hall on January 10th.

£½ MILLION

The cost of this, including the work to dencombe Street, land acquisition or diversions is estimated to be around £450,000.

An outline of the scheme is as follows:

1) Kirkmanshulme Lane is to be moved south to form a crossroads with St. John's Road and traffic lights installed. It is understood that there is to be no pedestrian phase included in these lights. as there is already a "green man" at Plymouth Grove. The pedestrian crossing from the library to the health centre may have to be moved to comply with Department of Environment standards.
2) St. John's Road will be curved round into line with Dickenson Road on the waste ground by the market.
3) Hamilton Road will be curved round to form a 'T' junction with St.Johns/ Dickenson Road, possibly controlled by traffic lights.
4) Dickenson Road will be blocked off between Hamilton Road and Stockport Road. and the lights at Stanley Grove will probably be removed, with limited access signs substituted.
5) The alley adjascent to the market, formerly known as 'Green Street' or 'Dencombe Street' to be improved to form a service road for the shops on Stockport Road.

(see diagram)

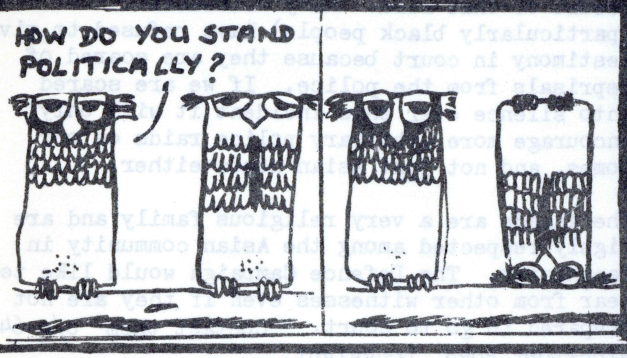
CONTINUED...

SHORTSIGHT NEWS

JOBS in LONGSIGHT

A little bird from the Town Hall's Industrial development unit mentioned that Daisy Works on Stockport Road is being converted to small industrial units at a cost of around £¼ million. All the units are already let, and the development should employ around 350 people.

It was also mentioned that they are reluctant to draw up similar plans for the Co-op print works on Hamilton Road because of the traffic situation, and because they feared 'the reaction of the local residents'. So; if you think you can solve the traffic problem and have a commercial idea under your hat, this could be your golden opportunity.



NEW POLICE STATION

Greater Manchester Police are to build a police station on Stockport Road between the Farmers Arms and the Takhdir Restaurant.

A maximum of 38 policemen will operate from this station between the hours of 8-00a.m. and 12-00 midnight. The building will be a single storey prefabricated structure.

They say that at present the nearest station is at Grey Mare Lane and feel that they should show a 'more definite presence in the area'.

TRAFFIC PLAN CONT?.....

The Highways Department intend that the plans for this development be displayed in Longsight Library, and that comments be sought from local people before work commences.

PUBLIC MEETING?

However, the Highways Department do not intend to call a public meeting. They approved the plans in principle on the 10th of January with the minimum of discussion, pausing only to say that public meeting was not the 'official channel for objections (hassle your councillor today!), but that they would send a speaker to a public meeting called by the local residents.

The plans are to be submitted for approval to the full council meeting on the 7th February, and to Planning on the 13th February. If both these Committees approve the plans it will take a mountain of public opinion to change their minds.

Although work is not expected to start before 1980/81, be warned that the process is under way, and there may be no opportunity to complain at a later date.

WHAT THIS COULD MEAN:

* Pedestrians, particularly the elderly, from North Longsight will have difficultyin crossing Kirkmanshulme Lane to get to the library, health centre and Social Services.
* Danger to children crossing St. John's Road outside their school.
* Danger to people going too and from the new health centre-on an island between Stockport Road and St. John's Road.
* More commuter traffic short-cutting down Hamilton Road and other residential streets to get onto Kingsway, particularly those coming along Dickenson Road from the Mosside Direction. (The mind can only strain to imagine what dodges this will open to the eyes of the craftier motorists.)

So, watch out for the plans in the library and leaflets and posters for the public meeting.

And if they do not appear, write to

Geoffrey F Read C Eng FICE FIMunE
Construct E FIHE MAPLE MBIM
City Engineer and Surveyor's Department
P O Box 488
Town Hall
Manchester M60 2JT

POLICE RAID

Following a police raid on a local corner shop resulting in charges against the proprietor and his son, a campaign has been set up to defend them. The Defence Campaign have given us the following details:

POLICE BREAK IN

On Monday, July 3rd 1978 at 12.30am a shop in Longsight was broken into by seven plain clothes police. Nazir Ahmed, the owner, thought the intruders were from the National Front. Especially as when his son, Munir, tried to phone the local police station, one of the plain clothes police ripped out the phone wires. They tried to defend themselves. After Nazir had got outside and shouted "Help! Help! It's the National Front attacking me!" to his neighbours, he was badly beaten by one of the plain clothes police.

OWNER CHARGED

Nazir has been charged with wounding a policeman with intent to cause grievous bodily harm. THIS COULD MEAN LIFE IMPRISONMENT! Munir has been charged with assault on two policemen. HE COULD BE IN JAIL FOR FIVE YEARS!

WITNESSES SCARED

At least 20 people are thought to have been witnesses to some of what happened outside the shop, apart from people who must have heard shouts or seen something from their own homes.

Nazir Ahmed after the raid

There was also a similar raid at another Pakistani house on Hamilton Road, resulting in an occupant jumping through a first floor window in panic. No charges were made as a result of that raid. Many witnesses (particularly black people) have refused to give testimony in court because they are scared of reprisals from the police. If we are scared into silence over this incident it will only encourage more arbitrary police raids on our homes, and not just Asian homes either.

The Ahmeds are a very religious family and are highly respected among the Asian community in Manchester. The Defence Campaign would like to hear from other witnesses even if they are not prepared to go to court. Contact them c/o 642 Stockport Road, Longsight.

LIBEL CASE CONTD.

COMPLAINTS...

When asked about official complaints made against him, Mr. Kelly had difficulty in remembering details. He said there had been 4 or 5 complaints including two of harrassment and one of assault. He said that it was not unusual for a police officer to have such complaints made. One in April 1978 alleged he harrassed a young boy on the Anson estate. Another person complained that he had threatened to assault them and a further complaint was made after Mr. Kelly tipped over a boys pedal cycle. Both were found unsubstantiated.

...WITHDRAWN

Further details about complaints were given by Superintendant Sadler who lives in Cheadle Hulme and is deputy to the Chief Superintendant in charge of the Complaints and Discipline Department. One complaint was made against 11 officers including P.C. Kelly, alleging abuse of authority, but this complaint was withdrawn soon after it was made. Mr. Sadler was asked if it was normal to visit the person complaining to discuss whether the complaint should be withdrawn or not. He replied that they visit to ask questions regarding the complaint. He did not agree that people are encouraged to drop complaints, and added that sometimes investigations continue even when a complaint is withdrawn.

...PROCEDURE

At this point Mr. Sadler added that people who make complaints don't expect the procedure which follows. The judge, Lord Justice Phillips, was under the impression that the New Police Complaints Procedure had changed the method of investigation of complaints. Mr. Sadler replied that the procedure for investigation by the police is still the same.

LONGSIGHT NEWS COMMENTS:- The new Police Complaints Procedure was put forward as a more independant way of dealing with complaints against the police, following a large number of criticisms that there was no point in complaints against the police being investigated by the police. But as Superintendant Sadler pointed out to the judge, there has been no change in the way the complaint is first investigated by the police. In fact, according to the Home Office, the new Police Complaints Board will only be involved in hearing complaints in exceptional cases.

Continued on page 9

LAD ONLY 14

The first witness for Mr. Kelly was Peter Burton of Droylesdon, now a magistrates clerk. He was the officer who went to Duncan Road after the window smashing incident. He said in evidence that he arrived alone, but later witnesses contradicted this. He also said that one of the lads gave his age as 17, but later changed this to 14. That was why the charge sheet was altered. In reply to cross examination he said he had no reason to believe the lad's age was only 14. He denied that the absence of parents at the questioning was the cause of the whole business. Mr. Burton claimed that he had not seen any unnecessary violence in his 4 years at Longsight Police Station.

FATHER BRENNAN

Mr. Kelly called Father Brennan, priest at St. Roberts Church, as a character witness. Ms Otten objected on the grounds that it was an abuse of his position and a priest should not take sides in a dispute in which his parishoners are involved. This objection was over-ruled by the judge.

CONGREGATION

Father Brennan said he had known Mr. Kelly very well for over 10 years. He said he was speaking on behalf of all his congregation (2,500 people) when he said that "they rate Mr. Kelly very highly indeed. He has been a great strength to them. They regard him as a friend". Father Brennan said Mr. Kelly was a very concientious person, and was like a "Gentle Giant".

PRACTISING

When asked exactly who he was speaking for, Father Brennan said he spoke for the people he knows very well. That is the 1,200 who come to church regularly.

He didn't know of any time when any of his parishoners had had trouble with Mr. Kelly. He said the opinion of practising catholics, whenever expressed of Mr. Kelly was one of gratitude and highest respect. People were dismayed that such things had been said about Mr. Kelly. They were shocked. "Have you heard about Kelly?" they said.

ON ONE SIDE

When asked if he knew that one of the lad's family were catholics he said that he did not, but they might claim to be. After being pressed quite hard, Father Brennan admitted that the defendant, Ms Otten, was also known to them as a catholic. Ms Otten asked if it was right and proper for him to intervene on one side. He replied that he was proud to stand up and be counted.

ANSON ESTATE

Another character witness, Mr. West of Copthorn Crescent on the Anson estate, was a union official at the Department of Employment, a member of the North West Area Whitley Council and a member of the Civil Service Union. He had known Mr. Kelly for 3½ years. He said that Mr. Kelly was very well liked especially by older people. Mr. West had been a victim of the young people on the Anson estate. He also referred to P.C. Kelly as a "Gentle Giant". He had heard only slight rumours that Mr. Kelly beats people up, and said that he was still highly respected in the area.

DEFENCE

Next Ms Otten opened her defence case by giving evidence herself. She said that at the time of the article police questioning of minors was happening a lot. Some mothers had made a complaint. But when some decided to drop the complaint, she advised the others to drop it as well. Then she thought of publishing it in the paper, hoping that if the police were named, they would be more carefull.

HIT ON HEAD

The first defence witness was the lad who had been beaten by P.C. Kelly. He said he had given his age as 16 because he thought that this would avoid his parents being involved. (In fact he learnt later that the age below which his parents would have to be brought in was 17). He was afraid of his parents reaction so he tried to pretend he was not a minor so they wouldn't be called in. He said P.C. Kelly had lifted his arm and struck him on top of the head. He had hit him twice with the flat of his hand, then once with clenched fist.

NO DOUBT

When asked about her son being beaten by Mr. Kelly, the lad's mother said "I would like to say I respect officer Kelly ... Officer Kelly did my son a great favour". "I have no doubt that it happened ... I feel very pleased that it happened".

NO HOPE

Another one of the lads said in evidence that P.C. Kelly hit him on the face and stomach, and threatened him with beating "within an inch of your life" until he admitted breaking the windows. He was taken to make a statement and hit again. Referring to the third lad, he said, "He was talking about our rights, saying they had no right to beat us up. Then the desk sergeant pushed his face towards the notice-board with a thing about rights, to make him read it. Then pulled his trousers down to humiliate him in front of us". He said that he himself wanted to complain. The desk sergeant said "see your solicitor". When he saw a solicitor the next morning he was told "you haven't a hope" with making a complaint.

OTHER INCIDENTS

Another lad from the Anson estate said P.C. Kelly's reputation was bad. "He pulls people in for nothing". He had considered making complaints but had not gone through with them. The judge would not allow him to go into details of other incidents involving P.C. Kelly

Yet another lad said he'd been pulled in, hit by P.C. Kelly and made to stand till he admitted stealing a music centre. He was under age but not accompanied by an adult throughout questioning.

Continued on page 10

LIBEL CASE CTD.

UNFAIR

In summing up Ms Otten said there was some evidence left out because she didn't know the right court procedure. Also the judge had ruled out evidence of other incidents involving P.C. Kelly. After the case she said another witness who felt very strongly had decided not to give evidence because this might prejudice the hearing of an other official complaint against Mr. Kelly. She said that the prosecution had tried to smear her and her witnesses by mentioning the records of witnesses. They also implied that she was biased against the police. They had given no evidence for this. They were very unfair.

UNCONCERNED

She said it was difficult to make complaints against the police, and they were not concerned about this: one officer had laughed in court at a reference to a book explaining people's rights. The Police Federation had said on T.V. that they wanted information from the public about police irregularities, but at the same time they financed this case against someone who sought to publicize such irregularities.

PERJURY

In summing up, the prosecution encouraged the Jury to look upon each side's evidence in different ways. It would be a serious matter if they didn't believe the police. They would be suggesting that the police had committed the crime of perjury. On the other hand it was of no account if they thought the lads were lying. This was just youthful fantasies.

WHO DO YOU BELIEVE ?

The judge also tried to bias the jury against Ms Otten's witnesses. He said they were "less impressive". He stressed the previous convictions of one of her witnesses and said he was certain to have a biased attitude towards this sort of situation. He did not mention any possible bias the police witnesses might have.

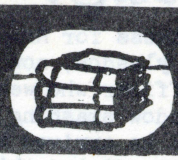
In the words of the judge himself, "In the end of the day it comes down to who do you believe"

NO CHANGE ?

Writers for Longsight News have recently seen with their own eyes two incidents where young people were questioned in the absence of their parents. In one case the mother was told to go away by the police. Your child could have been one of them.

And in case you think it couldn't be your child, we know the parents of some of the young people involved would consider themselves quite "respectable".

LONGSIGHT LIBRARY.



Since it opened in summer last year, the new library has attracted about 1,500 people a day through its doors. Its special features include:-

* One of the largest collections of Asian literature and music (on record and cassette) in the country.
* A community information centre which is staffed on a regular basis.
* An interview room where city councillors and Gerald Kaufman, M.P., are holding surgeries for local constituents. Age Concern and the city education careers advisory service are also using this facility.
* Meeting accomodation, at a charge, for cultural bodies.
* A large exhibition area (currently displaying an exhibition on Australian aboriginal people).

GROUPS utilising the play room include:-

* Mother and toddlers groups.
* Bangladesh women's and children's welfare project.
* Childminders drop-in centre (Thursday mornings)

Recent Innovations:-

* Literacy classes for mentally handicapped (on Monday evenings).
* Saturday morning club for Asian girls (with Urdu classes possibly commencing soon).
* Get-together sessions for children of primary school age.

An impressive record in a short period of time, we say, for what is now "the busiest branch library in all of Manchester".

View of New Building Site